

Rethinking the music producer's roles in Kenya: The nexus between the recording artist, sound engineer and the listener

Kenya is among the many countries in the world that is flooded with amateur producers producing amateur content which have hardly gained entry top world music charts. This is mostly attributed to technological advances and more so the introduction of Digital Audio Workstation (DAW), a computer based software that is able to record, edit, mix and master music. DAW has brought about the rise of home studios which are relatively cheap to set up hence, as Eisenberg (2015) notes, has created a wide range of creative actors, some of whom have little background in music beyond that of an avid listener, thus flooding the recording industry with amateur records. This paper therefore seeks to examine the current roles of the music producer vis a vis other key actors in music production industry in Kenya in the quest of producing popular content. The research will be guided by the following questions: Is the music producer a link between the artist, the sound engineer and the listeners? How does a music producer help in commodifying the artist? What are the artists sentiments towards the music producers and sound engineers? Ten different music producers and sound engineers will be interviewed to ascertain their actual roles. Ten different artists will also be interviewed to ascertain their exact place during the recording exercise. This research is significant because it gives insights in the following gap areas in music production industry in Kenya: a) the current roles of the music producers in Kenya vis a vis their actual roles b) suggestions on the role the music producer can take in order to produce popular content that can attract top world music awards c) generate knowledge in the field of music production in Kenya.

Primary author: KIRUI, Amon (Kabarak University)